

**GENDER AND THE TRANSFORMATION
OF THE PASTORAL IN
THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

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THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

By

DONNA MARIE MONTFORTS, B.A.

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AUTHOR: Donna Marie Montforts, B.A. (McMaster University)

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ABSTRACT

Although the seventeenth-century pastoral has generated much literary analysis, little has been written about gender and its significance in the employment of this genre. This work addresses this need. However, due to the restrictions of time and space, its scope is necessarily limited to an examination of six poets.

This thesis compares how the male and female writers perceived the retired life and the rôle of the poet throughout this tempestuous century as England moved from feudal to modern political, social and economic principles. Inasmuch as the male writers used the pastoral to address the destruction of England's former 'edenic' state, the feudal hierarchy, the female poets employed the pastoral to re-define their representation by the patriarchy and to develop their literary identity. My examination attempts to address the transformation of the pastoral during the seventeenth century by its male and female poets.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;
All just supply, and all relation:
Prince , subject , father , son , are things forgot,
For every man alone thinks he hath got
To be a phoenix, and then can be
None of that kind, of which he is but he.

John Donne, **An Anatomy of the World: The
First Anniversary**

In these memorable words, John Donne encapsulates the transitional nature of seventeenth-century England. It is an epoch characterized by the shift in power from the feudal hierarchical order, based on tradition that fused classical and Christian metaphysical concepts, to the governing structures of modern times. The rights of the traditional hierarchy were questioned by such radicals as the Diggers who supported an egalitarian society. England was moving from absolute to constitutional monarchy and from an economy based on feudal obligations to that of capitalism. In this tumultuous political and social climate , the seventeenth-century male and female writers turned to the Utopian 'ideal' of the pastoral to promote their views of order, to criticize other perspectives, to withdraw from intolerable social realities and to address the identity and the rôle of the creative artist.

Originating with Theocritus in the third century B.C. and adapted by Virgil, the pastoral was traditionally "an elaborately conventional poem expressing an urban poet's nostalgic image of the peace and simplicity of the life of shepherds and other rural folk in an idealized natural setting".¹ The conventions that were later imitated included a shepherd meditating on the rural muse, or engaging in a singing contest, or expressing his good or bad fortune with his mistress or grieving over the demise of a fellow shepherd.² The seventeenth-century poets referred to in this study implemented the urban/country contrast, the analysis of the poet's rôle and the pastoral dialogue.

The pastorals of Virgil and Horace drew on the golden age myth in which humanity lived ideally with nature and these poems promoted the "tillers of the land", those who would bring Rome, ravaged by civil war, back to its former agricultural prosperity.³ The myth provided the contrast between an 'ideal' former position and the insufferable present. The adaptability of the myth to many interpretations of the ideal state lent itself readily to the Christian pastoralist's garden of Eden. In Renaissance England, as in Classical Rome, the pastoral was used politically to promote the view of Queen Elizabeth's reign as peaceful and prosperous by representing England as the new Eden.

So too, seventeenth-century English writers such as

Ben Jonson appropriated the pastoral mode to promote the hierarchical philosophy and to condemn the newer capitalistic principles. Richard Hooker's (1554-1600) The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity expressed Anglican natural ideology. By naturalizing the hierarchical order, Hooker condoned its existence. He suggested that in the natural environment, one perceives the chain of being which reflects the divine pattern of creation. He stated that humanity had responsible dominion over nature and he also emphasized humanity's need for community and its obligation to "prefer the good of the whole before whatsoever their own particular".⁴ In the hierarchical perspective, woman's rôle was that of the 'Good Wife', chaste and fecund, in her subordinate position in the patriarchy. Ideally, she was "an able companion who maintains harmony by maintaining order"; that is, patriarchal order.⁵ Like nature, she was to be dominated but also to be treated responsibly.

While Hooker presents one of the philosophical poles of the century, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) reveals the other, the rise of materialistic principles which challenged the hierarchical values of interdependence and mutual obligation. Hobbes proposed that humanity is motivated by its desire for power and formed a society out of fear of its own destruction in the competitive struggle. He suggested that only a strong ruler could maintain order or peace. From his perspective, relationships

between individuals or those of humankind and nature are reduced to commercial value and therefore, are exploitive - the " value, or worth of a man is as of all other things, his price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his power".⁶ The pastoral became the arena where the conflict between feudal values and the newer political and social trends were addressed; that is, the contention between the sense of community and position and the rise of individualism and middle-class eminence.

An examination of the seventeenth-century's use of pastoral mode lends itself to the three historical periods of the era: the pre-civil war (before the 1640's), the civil war and Interregnum (1640's-1660) and finally, the Restoration with the re-establishment of the monarchy in 1660. In my comparison of the male and female poets of the century, I have chosen writers whom I felt represented the ethos of these periods in their pastoral poetry: the dominance of the 'ideal' hierarchical order and its values at the beginning of the century, the questioning of this system and the poet's rôle in the crisis at mid-century and the withdrawal from and criticism of urban materialism in the Restoration. The seventeenth-century pastorals' link to the hierarchical world view promoted by the nobility to ensure its dominance has prompted me to choose writers from, or influenced by this class. Also, the upper class would have

more access to its conventions.

For the male poets, the edenic myth of the pastoral suggests God's imposition of a male-dominated feudal order established in Genesis with the creation of Adam. He was created first and Eve, fashioned from his rib, was relegated to the subordinate rôle of his "help meet".⁷ Adam was given dominion over the creatures with his power to name. He was the original patriarch from whom fathers and kings obtained power over their private and state families. The seventeenth-century male poets drew on the authority to 'name' (to order as in writing) that stretched back to Adam and to a male-dominated literary tradition.

In the early part of the century, Ben Jonson's (1572/3-1637) country-house poems promoted the hierarchical order of the time as the 'ideal'. However, they also foreshadow Hobbesian materialism. While he presented the social rôle of the poet as moral teacher, he had to establish his literary authority since he was not a member of the ruling class. As mid-century approached and the former views of the feudalistic hierarchy was destroyed with the execution of Charles I and the shift to parliamentary power, Andrew Marvell's (1621-78) "Upon Appleton House, To My Lord Fairfax", reveals this transitional period from the old to the new system. His poem questions Jonson's pastoral values and the rôle of the poet in times of civil strife. In his 'amphibious' image, he attempts to balance the external

chaotic realm and his internal creative world. Towards the latter part of the century, the poetry of Charles Cotton (1630-87) fosters an escapist perspective of nature, as materialism dominates urban England. He suggests that the rural environment is not impervious to Hobbesian influence. In all three cases, the attempt to find and promote order placed women and nature in a subordinate position and thus vulnerable to exploitation.

While the male writers of the century could draw on patriarchal authority, supported by educational institutions and promoted by literary tradition, such was not the case for the women poets of the period. In the male-dominated hierarchical order, their subordinate position, preserved in social institutions, confined them to the private domestic sphere. The onus to be 'modest' deterred many women from writing and thus, from entering the male public realm. While the educational system encouraged classical learning for boys, girls from aristocratic families had no access to institutional classical training. For the most part, they were educated in the basic skills and the feminine arts of music, dancing, painting, and needlework whether at home or in women's boarding-schools. Indeed, in the latter part of the century, Bathsua Makin promoted her women's academy which offered classical courses and commented on women's inferior education. In "An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen in Religion, Manners, Arts and Tongues" of 1673,

Makin states, "The barbarous custom to breed women low, is grown general amongst us, and has prevailed so far that it is verily believed (especially amongst a sort of debauched sots) as women are not endued with such reason as men, nor capable of improvement by education, as they are."⁸

Confined to the private sphere, denied a classical education and having no established feminine literary tradition to which to appeal for authority, women poets of the century had to find sanction for their writing within the patriarchal framework and discover ways to express their literary selves. The degeneration of the feudal system provided an historical space in which women could transcend their subordinate positions and enter the public literary sphere. Why did they use the pastoral which promoted the retired life and a male-dominated hierarchy, both of which reduced women to political passivity and a dependency that rendered them vulnerable to exploitation? I propose that, to a certain extent, they had internalized the patriarchal assumptions concerning female modesty and their relegation to the private sphere. However, they were determined to gain some control over their representation and self-expression within this framework. First, their adoption of the patriarchal image of the pious female, while rendering them politically passive, enabled them to redeem their negative status as Eve's fallen daughters. Second, they could take advantage of the pastoral 'ideal' concept to visualize

a new order of equality for themselves. Third, the use of the pastoral suggests the search for feminine literary authority which led them back to Eve and Genesis. Eve was endowed by God with generative powers in her procreative ability and literary endeavour takes part in this creativity. While the male poets looked to Genesis II:20-23, for their male-dominated hierarchical perspective, women could have referred to Genesis for support in their bid for equal literary status. In Genesis I:27-28, God created man and woman at the same time and they enjoyed equal status in creative ability- "male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply". Finally, as the descendants of Eve and thus 'naturally subordinate', women were represented in the hierarchy as the 'Good Wife' who maintained harmony by accepting her status. She could receive sanction for her writing by presenting it as a promotion of virtue to be found in the private and politically passive sphere.

The female pastoral writers can be analyzed from their historical framework. Like Jonson, Emilia Lanier (1569-1645) uses the country-house genre. However, "The Description of Cooke-ham" attempts to redeem women from their fallen Eve image and endorses an egalitarian system by promoting an idealized female society based on the equality established by spiritual values. In her enhancement of female virtue, Lanier receives

sanction for her poetry. Yet, the destruction of this female society by the male-dominated hierarchy attests to the dominance of this system in the early part of the century.

Margaret Cavendish's (1623-73) poetry takes advantage of the mid-century upheaval to present an androgynous image of women writers as creatures of both the private and public spheres. Like Marvell, she is a transitional poet who attempts to unify opposing realms. She works within the patriarchal framework by claiming nature's creativity and feminine virtue for herself. By expropriating masculine ambition, she aspires to the equal authority to create. She also gains sanction by appealing to her female imagination and she stresses her originality. For both Cavendish and Marvell, the external chaos induced them to find individual order in the creative mind of the poet linked to nature.

Lastly, in the Restoration, Katherine Philips (1631-64) links the private realm of women and nature in order to promote women's virtue in contrast to the materialistic values found in the patriarchal world. Like Lanier, but in a less pious vein, her appeal for authority is in her promotion of female virtue. She also endorses an egalitarian society in her praise of female non-hierarchical relationships. However, this female society is not destroyed by the patriarchal hierarchy. This seems to

indicate that there is no threat from the patriarchy since she has internalized hierarchical views and has supported feminine passivity in the private sphere. It also suggests that due to her access to an educational background that allowed her some recognition in the male literary society, educational resources were beginning to play more of a part in rendering women intellectually equal in artistic endeavour.

This thesis will employ the aforementioned historical framework for examining the seventeenth-century pastoral's political connection and its implications for the poets' presentation of their artistic rôles. The male poets promoted patriarchal order as England moved to modern political, economic, and social concepts and they perceived themselves as socially alienated. The female writers employed the pastoral to find literary validity and to gain some control over their own representation and self-expression within the restrictions of the century. In its limitation to six poets, this study cannot assume to be conclusive.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹M.H.Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, 4th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), p.127.

²Ibid.

³Virgil, Georgics II trans. Theodore Chickering Williams in The Georgics and Eclogues of Virgil (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), p.64.

⁴Richard Hooker, The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Books I-IV., (London: George Routledge and Sons, n.d.), p.69.

⁵Margaret J.M.Ezell, The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family (Chapel Hill, North Carolina : The University of North Carolina Press, 1987), p.42.

⁶Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan : or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil, ed. Michael Oakeshott (New York: Collier Books, 1977), p.73.

⁷Genesis 2:20. The Holy Bible (King James Version).

⁸Bathsua Makin, "An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen in Religion , Manners, Arts , and Tongues", in The Whole Duty of a Woman: Female Writers in Seventeenth Century England ed. Angeline Goreau, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1985), p.4.

CHAPTER II

Ben Jonson: The Promotion of the
Declining Feudal Hierarchy

Ben Jonson employs his country-house poems to promote the old ideal, the feudal hierarchy, which was assailed in the early part of the seventeenth century by the movement to materialistic views. Ideally, Jonson's manorial estates symbolized, at the household plane, the feudal male-dominated hierarchical values that were upheld by a system of interdependence and mutual obligation. These values were to be reflected at the state level. Just as the lord was the patriarchal head of his household, so too, the king held power over his subjects. However, England's aristocrats of the pre-revolutionary period were unlike their feudal predecessors, which presented problems for Jonson in recapturing the 'ideal'. Indeed, the nobility had become an agrarian capitalistic class and functioned as government administrators and not as warriors with links to the trading community and with investments in mining, manufacturing and colonial ventures.¹ Caught up in the social and economic upheavals of the century, Jonson's poems reflect a double perspective. While his primary concern was

portraying feudal values found in the Sidneys and Wroths, he also reveals an English landed aristocracy that had incorporated capitalistic values.

Moreover, since Jonson was not of the nobility and was dependent on patronage, his rôle as poet presented some difficulties. To support his transcendence of class, he established his authority by linking himself and his poetry to his classical forefathers and assumes his didactic role - to discover "the exact knowledge of all virtues, and their Contraries, with ability to render the one lov'd, the other hated, by his proper embattaling them".² Indeed, "To Penshurst" was provided by Martial's epigram "Biana nostri villa, Bassi Faustini" and follows a similar line of development with the description of the house as useful, the fertility of the estate and the passage on country hospitality.³ "To Sir Robert Wroth" was influenced by Horace's Epode II, Virgil's second Georgic and Juvenal's tenth Satire.⁴ By examining these two country-house poems with respect to Jonson's treatment of the panegyric, his view of nature, human relationships and his own role as poet one can discern the tensions and ambiguities that reflect the shifting times of the early seventeenth century.

In "To Penshurst" and "To Sir Robert Wroth", Jonson praises and promotes the feudalistic hierarchical values

that he exemplified by the Sidneys and the Wroths. What he proposes is that, although the old feudal structure had exploitive elements, these were balanced by a sense of obligation due to the interdependence of the chain of being. What he condemns is the movement to the irresponsible and unlimited exploitation that he perceives in the capitalistic values of the landed aristocracy. Jonson suggests that the Sidneys and Wroths have exercised their social responsibility in their manorial duties and what he captures in his poems is the encroachment of capitalistic principles in the countryside. From this perspective, Jonson contrasts the Sidney's right use of wealth in promoting the good management of their estate to those who build for "envious show".⁵ He extols the natural and essential qualities of soil and air at Penshurst while he denounces the artificial trappings of "marble"(1.2) "gold"(1.3) found in the new houses. In order to avoid suggesting that there is a contradiction among factions of the ruling class since the Sidneys were relatively new arrivals (Penshurst was acquired in 1552), Jonson establishes his contrast on a moral basis.⁶ In his promotion of feudal ideals, he ignores historical fact.

Jonson heaps praises upon Sir Robert Wroth because he has assumed his proper manorial obligations and has not succumbed to the growing

trend of landowner absenteeism among self-interested capitalistic aristocrats who viewed land as a commodity. Again, by locating the contrast on a moral basis, Jonson avoids suggesting that the Wroths are not from an agrarian capitalistic class. The poet promotes the well-managed and self sufficient Wroth estate: "but canst, at home, in thy securer rest / Live with un-bought provision blest".⁷ He denounces the irresponsible amassing of wealth in the capitalistic urban environment:

Let that goe heape a masse of wretched wealth,
 Purchas'd by rapine worse then stealth ,
 And brooding o're it sit,with broadest eyes,
 Not doing good, scarce when he dyes(1.1.81-84)

In both "To Penshurst" and "To Sir Robert Wroth", Jonson idealizes nature and human relationships to promote the Anglican ethic, the feudal values of hierarchy and mutual social obligation. But again there are undertones of capitalistic exploitation. In "To Penshurst", the poet's references to the "lower land"(1.22) the "middle ground"(1.24) and the "tops"(1.25)suggest the feudal concept of the hierarchical universe of correspondences in which each part of the chain of being contributed to the welfare of the whole. In this sense of the 'golden age' of England, nature is portrayed as the generous provider of food and recreation for the Sidneys in response to their good management of the estate. The copse

"never fails to serve the seasoned deer"(1.20) the carps are impatient to be caught and fruit is available "that every child may reach"(1.44). At the same time, this spirit of generosity emphasizes the benefits of mutual obligation in a system where exploitation of nature and human labour is limited by good management. However, Jonson also acknowledges the threat of unlimited exploitation in the countryside under capitalism in his allusion to the walls of enclosure:

And though thy walls be of the country stone,
They are reared with no man's ruin, no man's groan;
There's none that dwell about them wish them down.

(11.45-47)

Moreover, this sense of hierarchy and mutual responsibility with its exploitive undertones is suggested in Jonson's treatment of human relationships in "To Penshurst". He proposes that, just as nature pays its tribute in fish to the Sidneys, so too, the tenants pay their tribute or tithes to the gentry in produce. Jonson proposes that the generosity of the tenants is reciprocated by the Sidney family to create an atmosphere of harmony. The tenants bring emblems of their "love"(1.57) and regard in the form of "nuts, some apples "(1.52) and "Cheeses"(1.53). These items are not demanded or needed by the Sidneys but are acts of generous reciprocity for the family's hospitality, which is emphasized in the community

meal celebrated in the great hall. Further, this endorsement of hierarchy and mutual obligation extends from the household to the sovereign /subject relationship. King James is also beneficiary of the family's benignancy.

While this spirit of spontaneous generosity masks the exploitation of tenant labour and women that is inherent in the feudal patriarchy, Jonson sought rather to emphasize its restrictive exploitation of human resources. However, there are some allusions to capitalism. Both Lady Sidney and the tenants' daughters are equalized under the marketing values placed on women as seen in the 'produce' imagery. Lady Sidney is identified in her "fruitful" state with the fruitful tenants' daughters who are "ripe" and symbolized in the "plum or pear" (11.90,54,57).⁸ Lady Sidney is fruitful in two ways alluded to in the poem. She was the heiress of a large fortune (suggested in the reference to her maiden name, Gamage) and she also produced many children. In both cases, she is represented in a subordinate rôle in the patriarchy as a vessel to increase the Sidneys' wealth and also as the chaste producer of the next generation indoctrinated in the "mysteries of manners, arms and arts"(1.98).

In "To Sir Robert Wroth", Jonson also emphasizes the sense of mutual responsibility of the feudal hierarchy that restrained its exploitation of natural and human resources and at the same time, he captures

capitalistic undertones in the Wroth estate. Again Jonson suggests that through the Wroths' good management of their estate, nature provides generously for their well-being exemplified in the stags' and hares' contribution to their entertainment in the hunt. The poet states that the sheep are fleeced, meadows mowed, the apples harvested, the hogs fattened and the trees cut. By not referring to the workers that produce such surplus, Jonson suggests the limitation of labour exploitation under the feudal system of mutual obligation and beneficence .

However, there are some capitalistic undertones in Jonson's presentation of the Wroth hospitality and generosity which can be perceived in the tension that exists between his advancing and subverting of the hierarchy. Lady Wroth is linked to "the great Heroes, of her race" but in the spirit of munificence of the dining hall, the Wroths are willing to treat their tenants as equals: "Freedom doth with degree dispense"(11.56, 58,). However, when Jonson interjects " (their rudeness then is thought no sin)", he suggests that except for these special occasions, these "rurall folk" are thought uncouth and even morally deficient (11.54, 53). In reality, the Wroths do not treat their tenants with abiding generosity or regard as the feudal ideal proposes. Furthermore:

And in their cups, their cares are drown'd:

They thinke not, then which side the cause shall leese

Nor how to get the lawyer fees.

(11.60-62)

suggests not only that the feast may be organized to prevent civil strife but could also refer to the tenants' objections to enclosure by the Wroths as capitalistic landowners. Either way, the reference to the troubles of the farmers undermines Jonson's presentation of the Wroths as exemplifying idealistic feudal values and suggests the disintegration of the feudalistic sense of reciprocal obligation and limited exploitation.

Lastly, Jonson's portrayal of his own role as poet presented some problems since he exemplifies the social mobility of the new order and promotes the older feudal hierarchical concepts. In "To Penshurst", Jonson suggests his equal status with Lord Sidney: "That is his lordship's shall be also mine "(1.64). As stated previously, Jonson could claim his authority as poet through his link to literary classical forefathers and is thus descended from a literary nobility. Also, he places himself within the values of the feudal hierarchy. As the tenants in "To Penshurst" present their tribute and love to Lord Sidney in the emblem of their produce, so too, Jonson's country-house poem becomes an emblem of his duty and love. He is a social prophet who teaches the moral values of mutual obligation and responsibility. As Lord Sidney provides hospitality to reimburse the tribute of his tenants, so

too, he furnishes financial support for Jonson's social service. In this way, Jonson escapes the condemnation that his praise is insincere since he is dependent on patronage.

Jonson uses his country-house poems to promote the old 'ideal', the feudal hierarchy, with its sense of social responsibility which limited the exploitation of natural and human resources. What he condemns is the growing materialistic values exemplified in capitalism with its self-interest and irresponsible exploitation. His pastoral poems with their basis in the edenic myth capture a double perspective - the feudal 'ideal' and the imposition of reality in the encroachment of capitalistic principles. As a poet, his transcendence of class suggests the new order; however, he also fulfills his social rôle in the hierarchy as a moral teacher. What he also presents is the subordinate rôle of women in the early seventeenth century. They function as vessels of the patriarchy- "fruitful, [and] chaste withal" ("To Penshurst", 1.90). Restricted to the domestic sphere, women ensure the legitimate continuance of the family and the patriarchy.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹Don E.Wayne,Penshurst: The Semiotics of Place and the Poetics of History,(Madison :The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984),p.24.

²William G.McClung,The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry (Berkeley and Los Angeles:University of California Press,1977),p.132.

³G.R.Hibbard,"The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century,"Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes XIX(1956), 163.

⁴Ibid.,165.

⁵Ben Jonson,"To Penshurst" in Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry, ed.A.M.Witherspoon, (New York:Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 1.1,p.763. Further references to this poem will be taken from the above source.

⁶Don E.Wayne,Penshurst, p.57.

⁷Ben Jonson,"To Sir Robert Wroth" in The Complete Poetry of Ben Jonson, ed. William B. Hunter Jr.,(New York: New York University Press,1963), 11.13,14, p.81. Further references to this poem will be drawn from the above source.

⁸Don E.Wayne,Penshurst, p.69

CHAPTER III

Emilia Lanier: Redeeming Eve by the Authority
of Virtue

While Jonson's country-house poems capture England's movement from feudalistic to capitalistic values and the patriarchal view of women, Emilia Lanier's, "The Description of Cooke-ham" in Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum presents the subordinate and, at the same time, expanding rôle of women in the early part of the seventeenth-century. Internalizing patriarchal assumptions concerning female modesty and the private sphere, Lanier worked within this framework to enter the male literary public realm so that she could gain control over the positive representation of women. The poet took advantage of the Renaissance view that the education of women should be encouraged to promote piety in order to obtain support for her writing as an educational tool which fosters virtue. She acquires authority for herself as an instrument of God. Her edenic female society based on spiritual values redeems women from their fallen status as the daughters of Eve. In her presentation of an egalitarian society at Cookham, based on the equality of the soul, Lanier addresses the problem of patronage and also subverts Jonson's ideal of the male-dominated hierarchical structure. However, the fall of her female paradise due to

the exercise of male prerogative, acknowledges the power of the patriarchal hierarchy. While Jonson is optimistic about his ability to influence society, Lanier realizes that her ideal of raising women to an equal status with their male counterparts is doomed by women's subordinated position in the seventeenth century.

Indeed, the Renaissance concept of women hovered between the view that they were Eve figures who, through their weak natures, brought about the fall of man and the concept that women were virtuous, the vessel of man's redemption in Christ (i.e. the Virgin Mary). Betty Travitsky suggests that, while the legal status of women in the English Renaissance remained static or perhaps declined, the rôle of women in the home "became increasingly the only, but at the same time the newly elevated, rôle for women".¹ This elevation was due to the Christian humanists and Protestant reformers who supported educational programs for females. Both were interested in producing virtuous women and felt that education would enable females to read and meditate not only on the bible but also on Christian writings and teachings. Also, this would facilitate the religious instruction of their children. The early Christian humanists fostered classical learning for aristocratic English women. The Protestant reformers, through their priesthood of all believers, advocated

an educational program for women of all classes that stressed knowledge of the bible and training in practical skills. In this context, Lanier entered the literary field.

Her Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum was written not only for patronage but to redeem women from their image as the fallen daughters of Eve. She uses 'virtue' both to establish her authority as a writer and to undermine patriarchal misogyny. By presenting her book as an educational tool that fosters piety and herself as a spiritual healer who delivers "the health of the soule" ("To the Ladie Margaret, Countess Dowager of Cumberland,") Lanier justifies her own literary endeavour within the social framework.² The poet suggests that like a mirror, her book reflects the virtue of such noble women as the Countess of Cumberland who would influence future generations to piety as a "light unto those who come after" ("To the Ladie Margaret", 67). She sets up a female tradition of spirituality to which she connects herself in order to gain authority for her authorship and from which she can acquire support for the positive representation of women. Female virtue in the present, portrayed in Lady Margaret and in the future, presented in her daughter, Lady Anne, is linked to the past in biblical heroines-Deborah, Jael, Hester and Christ's mother, Mary. In "To the Virtuous Reader", the poet states that her work is to encourage

"all good Christians and honourable minded men to speak reverently of our sexe"(78). But she also justifies the writing in the context of the times by her appeal to modesty and her promotion of virtue:

...I refer these my imperfect endeavours, knowing that according to their owne excellent dispositions, they will rather cherish , nourish, and increase the least spark of virtue where they find it...

(78)

"The Description of Cooke-ham" forms a third part of Lanier's book and extols the estate of Lanier's patron, Lady Margaret, as a lost Eden. Cookham was the Countess' temporary retreat from court due to the scandal accompanying her husband's amorous misconduct.³ The poem shares some of the conventions of Jonson's country-house genre extolling the virtue of the owner by praising her estate. While Jonson's poem, based on classical models, promotes feudal hierarchical values, Lanier's more original poem both advocates a female egalitarian society and it recognizes, regrettably, the ascendancy of the male-dominated system. Consequently, her panegyric has an elegiac tone. Lanier's treatment of the panegyric and her view of nature and human relationships as well as the poet's rôle, can be examined as a basis of comparison to Jonson's pastorals. The poem was published in 1611 and may or may not have been written before "To Penshurst".⁴

While the Sidneys and Wroths are models for society as a whole, Lady Margaret and her daughter, Lady Anne, become the exemplar for Renaissance English women. Although at the beginning of the poem, Lanier links both the countess and Cookham to God's grace and prelapsarian Eden, she also establishes a tone of lament indicating that this female paradise cannot be permanent-"Farewell(sweet Place) where virtue then did rest"(1.7).⁵ By contrasting the mutability of "worldly Joys"(1.14) and the constancy of "celestiall pleasures"(1.15), she proposes that even for virtuous women no lasting happiness can be found in the fallen world. Lanier proposes that the ruin of the female Eden, peopled by herself, the Countess and Lady Anne, is due to the male society in her reference to the masculine sphere of power, the hierarchical state:

Where our great friends we cannot dayly see,
 So great a difference there in degree.
 Many are placed in those Orbes of State,
 Partners in honour, so ordain'd by Fate.

(11.105-108)

Lanier and Jonson portray nature and human relationships from different perspectives. Inasmuch as Jonson presents an idealized nature and feudal relations to foster hierarchical manorial principles, Lanier unites nature and the female private realm to promote her female pious and egalitarian society as natural and to present

the male hierarchical state as dominant but artificial. Since nature is an instrument of God reflecting His handiwork, so too, in their virtue, women reflect spiritual values that endorse an equality of the soul. In this way, the poet subverts the Anglican ethos for her positive representation of women.

By employing pathetic fallacy, Lanier establishes the harmony of nature and the female society so that nature suffers a fall in response to the departure of the women from Cookham, indicating that a female Edenic state is not possible in the mutable patriarchic world. Lanier emphasizes the pre and post lapsarian state of the women in her cycle of the seasons. The happiness and harmony of the women in their unfallen female community is underscored by the portrayal of nature in the seasons of life, spring and summer: "the trees with leaves, with fruits, with flowers clad, /Embrac'd each other, seeming to be glad"(11.23,24). In this paradise, she proposes that the women are "great friends"(1.105). The "sports" of Lady Anne in which the poet "did alwaies beare a part" further indicate the rapport between the women and present a female paradise free from anxiety and in harmony with the natural world (11.119, 121). However, Lanier's tone of lament suggests that this ideal state is not permanent in its subordination to and dependency on the male state. The winds provide a "sad murmure" (1.41). The mythical reference to Philomela alludes

to the unhappiness and destruction brought about by male lust and is a reminder of the Countess' withdrawal from court life.

The fall of the women from this female paradise is underscored by and united with nature in Lanier's portrayal of the seasons of death, fall and winter. Unlike the first fall, the patriarchy, not Eve, is culpable. Their departure from Cookham is linked to the dominant male realm of the state which renders this natural community of women subordinate and powerless - " But your occasions call'd you so away, /That nothing there had power to make you stay " (11.147,148). At the withdrawal of the women, nature responds with " sad dismay"(1.130) to their unhappiness and like the original fall, becomes subject to time and decay. The "...leaves did whither, / Changing their colours as they grewe together"(11.135,136). The landscape assumes the death hue of winter as the tops of the trees become frozen like " Ages hoarie haires" (1.143) and "...all green things did make the earth their grave"(1.196).

In presenting a more spiritual nature than Jonson, Lanier promotes the more virtuous image of women, establishes the basis for their egalitarian society on the equality of the soul, achieves authority for her authorship and justifies her work. The poet suggests that the natural environment at Cookham was conducive to the Countess' meditation on God's attributes:

While you the time in meditation spent,
 Of their Creators powre, which there you saw,
 In all his Creatures held a perfit Law;
 And in their beauties did you plaine descrie ,
 His beauty, wisdom, grace, love, majestie.

(11.76-80)

Here, Lady Margaret read the scripture and sung hymns praising God. However, influenced by her Anglican and aristocratic connections, Lanier supports the contemplative life but does not endorse monastic views. The Countess is praised for an active piety in her works of mercy-" With blessed Joseph you did often feed / Your pined brethren , when they stood in need."(11.91,92)

The promotion of spiritual values at Cookham is the foundation for the women's equal status in contrast to the male-dominated hierarchical state. Lanier associates "degree"(1.106) with the male power structure whose artificial standards do not incorporate the 'naturally superior' spiritual values of Christian love:

Many are placed in those Orbes of state,
 Partners in honour, so ordain'd by Fate:
 Neerer in show, yet farther off in love,

(11.107-110)

In the community of the women, the poet advocates an equality based on that of souls. She suggests that, unlike the material male world where inheritance signifies status

and power, women inherit virtue from their mothers. Lady Anne has inherited "true virtue"(1.96) since she comes from "...Cliffords race,/Of noble Bedfords blood, faire streame of Grace"(11.93,94).

Further, the poet advocates this spiritual equality in her relationship with her patron which lends her authority and justifies her writing. Lanier questions her own prerogative to write about the great: "but wither am I carried in conceit?/ My Wit too weake to conster of the great"(11.111,112). She concludes that all are equal in God's eyes: " Why not? although we are but borne of earth,/We may behold the Heavens, despising death."(11.113,114). From this perspective, the Countess' Christian love would demand her provision for the "pined brethren"(1.92), those fellows in Christ who were less materialistically fortunate, like the poet herself. In this Christian female society, Lady Margaret becomes a disciple/muse figure inspiring Lanier to grace and the promotion of piety through her writing :

Farewell(sweet Cooke-ham)where I first obtain'd
Grace from that Grace where perfit Grace remain'd;
And where the Muses gave their full consent,
I should have powre the virtuous to content.

(11.1-4)

Further, Lanier uses the symbol of the oak and the exchanged kiss between Lady Margaret and the poet to justify

herself and her writing. The oak in the female paradise at Cookham represents the redeemed tree of knowledge. Unlike its destructive first counterpart, it is linked to spiritual knowledge that enhances piety. In its connection to the cedar and palm, the oak has spiritual significance. "In their Biblical contexts, the cedar is the building material for the temple of God, and the palm is the symbol of spiritual victory".⁶ From the oak's elevated position, the Countess is able to observe God's creation and meditate on "His beauty, wisdom, grace, love, majesty" (1.80). As an instrument in the advancement of spiritual knowledge, the tree is symbolic of Lanier's writing. The poet links the tree to books -at that "faire tree" (1.157), "many a learned Booke was read and skand"(1.161). The exchange of kisses through the oak suggests that Lady Margaret endorses Lanier's book in its promotion of the virtue and the affection found in this female Eden. The book and both the Countess and Lanier have become the means to encourage spiritual values and are thus equalized in this endeavour. Lanier indicates this perspective when she states:

When I am dead thy name in this may live,
Wherein I have perform'd her noble hest,
Whose virtues lodge in my unworthy breast.

(11.206-208)

In this way, Lanier overcomes the patron/poet inequality and

obtains her justification as a female poet in the framework that was available to women at this time -literary endeavour for the promotion of piety.

Lanier's "The Description of Cooke-ham" is significant in its portrayal of the female writer's difficult position in the early part of the century. Inasmuch as Jonson could draw on the male literary tradition for authority and pastoral concepts in the promotion of feudalistic hierarchical ideals with its subordination of women, Lanier's position was more complex. Without the support of a female literary tradition, she had to work within the social restrictions of modesty and the private sphere in order to enter the public male literary realm and present her ideal, a virtuous female egalitarian society. She employed the social framework that was available for female literary authority and justification -God and the advancement of piety. While Jonson's poetry alludes to the reality of the times, the movement to Hobbesian materialism, Lanier's pastoral acknowledges the female reality, the dominance of the patriarchal state, the old ideal. Her endorsement of a superior spiritual status for women seems to be a passionate bid for elevating the status of women.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹Betty Travitsky, The Paradise of Women: Writings by Englishwomen of the Renaissance, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), p.237.

²Emilia Lanier, "Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum" in The Poems of Shakespeare's Dark Lady, ed.A.L.Rowse, (London:Jonathan Cape , 1978),p.67.

³A.L.Rowse, The Poems of Shakespeare's Dark Lady, p.31.

⁴Barbara K.Lewalski, "Of God and Good Women:The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer "in Silent But for the Word:Tudor women as patrons ,translators,and writers of religious works, ed.Margaret P. Hannay, (Kent, Ohio:Kent State University Press, 1985), p.220.

⁵Emilia Lanier,"The Description of Cooke-ham" in The Poems of Shakespear's Dark Lady,1.7, p.137.

⁶Elaine V.Beilin,Redeeming Eve :Women Writers of the English Renaissance, (Princeton, N.J.:Princeton University Press,1987),p.204

CHAPTER IV

**Marvell and Transition : In Search of the Map
for Order**

At the beginning of the century, the country-house poems of Jonson and Lanier address, from opposing perspectives, the dominance of the patriarchal feudal hierarchy. The pastorals of the mid-century poets mirror the turmoil in the aftermath of civil war and the destruction of monarchical rule. Cromwell's protectorate symbolized the obliteration of the old feudal hierarchy based on monarchic preeminence and the rise of parliamentary power. For some radicals, the termination of the old system enhanced the move towards an egalitarian society. In 1651, Gerrard Winstanley's "The Law of Freedom in a Platform, or True Magistracy Restored" portrayed Cromwell as a Moses figure destroying the old order enshrined in law and in the Anglican Church and restoring the land and liberties to "the oppressed commoners of England".¹ Hobbes' Leviathan of 1651, promoted materialistic principles that supported the new capitalistic order with its emphasis on commercial value. It was during this period that Andrew Marvell wrote "Upon Appleton House, to my Lord Fairfax". His poem goes beyond Jonson's employment of the country-house genre as a form of the panegyric and reflects the complexities of this period.

The poem is dedicated to the poet's patron, Lord Fairfax, whose protest against Cromwell's war with Scotland resulted in his retirement to his family estate at Nun Appleton in 1650.² his poem questions the social significance of the pastoral poem and the role of the poet in times of political strife.

Marvell examines different perspectives on the retired life and questions the validity of its edenic base in the mutable world of civil chaos. His ironic tone suggests the tension that exists between an 'ideal' vision and reality -England's former 'garden state' and its present militaristic order. He proposes that no place or condition of retirement can be free from the impingement of external society. However, influenced by his Puritan affiliations, he has contempt for monasticism and seeks meaning in the meditative mind of the individual, especially that of the creative artist. Jonson portrays the subordinate rôle of women as part of the feudal hierarchical order in which the lord represents the king in patriarchal dominion. Unable to present this correspondence under Cromwell, Marvell attempts to restore a patriarchal hierarchical structure by linking women's private world to the retired life and subordinating both to the demands of a male-dominated society. Both Isabel Thwaites and Maria Fairfax must submit to their social function in providing Fairfax heirs. By examining the complex relations of Lord Fairfax, Isabel Thwaites, the

poet, himself, and Maria to the pastoral ideal, England's former hierarchical state, we can perceive Marvell's quest for order in social chaos.

Inasmuch as the Sidneys and Wroths represent feudal hierarchical values that were supported in the institutions of the church and state, Lord Fairfax symbolizes these principles found in the individual who lacks this social reinforcement in times of civil strife. In Lord Fairfax, Marvell questions the validity of an enforced retirement that, due to political circumstances, can have no vital link to society and its amelioration. This perspective is enhanced by the poet's ironic tone in both praising Fairfax's manorial values and at the same time undercutting their social impact by presenting the impingement of the external mutable world on the countryside. Marvell presents Fairfax's feudal sense of social responsibility based on the world view of interdependence in the concept of his patron's 'humility'. The general perceives his 'true' place in the cosmic hierarchical order as combining both the circle and the quadrature -the perfect soul connected to the divine realm and the imperfect body united to the mutable world. Marvell suggests that it is the individual recreative mind in its link to divine order revealed in nature that structures the general's private world. Fairfax "Did for a Model vault his Brain "and fashioned a house with a sense of proportion:

"But all things are composed here / Like Nature, orderly and near " (11.6, 25-26).³ This is contrasted to the "unrul'd" and irresponsible men who build out of their vanity not acknowledging that they and the things of the earth are mutable (1.9). Fairfax's sense of his own position and responsibility in the cosmology encourages his "open Door" policy in providing for the poor(1.66). Further, by linking Fairfax to Romulus and his humble beginnings, Marvell connects spiritual values to social prominence , the private conscience to the health of the body politic .

The poet examines the private/social interdependence in the mutable world of civil strife. How can these principles be effective in England's fallen state? What Marvell suggests is that as the soul and body are interdependent, so too, there can be no retired sphere without the impingement of the external social realm . Just as England, which was the "... Paradise of four Seas,/ Which heaven planted ..." fell through the civil war and lost its former 'state of grace', so too , Fairfax's private garden reflects this fall(11. 323,324). Whereas before the gardener had authority in Britain encouraging creative growth, now the soldiers' destructive forces are in control. Marvell mirrors this disruptive change of power in the military images that dominate his patron's garden and his retired world. He suggests that the general's former link to England's mili-

taristic forces follows him into the retired world "...when retired here to Peace,/His warlike Studies could not cease" (11, 283,284). The flowers display their "Ensigns" and shoot "fragrant Volleys" and each bee is a "Sentinel" (11.294,298,318). Since the individual and social worlds are inter-linked, Fairfax can find no retired peace and at the same time, owing to his enforced retirement, he can no longer have a positive influence on England, helping her "...Gardens spring/ Fresh as his own and flourishing"(11.347, 348). Marvell questions the validity of a retirement that is enforced and consequently, can have no social connection.

The poet also rejects a monastic view of retirement on the same premise in his examination of the past history of the Fairfax family. He endorses a retirement that is linked to social responsibility. This is presented in the private realm in William Fairfax's 'heroic' rescue of Isabel Thwaites from the nunnery so that she could provide Fairfax heirs and at the state position, in Henry VIII's appropriation of church land for state use. In both cases, Marvell supports the dominance of the old feudal patriarchal hierarchy as expressed in the private household in William's subordination of Isabel, and at the state level, in Henry's subjugation of the Catholic Church in England.

Marvell undermines the spiritual significance of the

abbey by presenting the materialism of its nuns and portraying William as heroic. The nuns, desirous of obtaining Isabel's property, try to seduce her to become a nun. However, their appeal to spirituality subverted by their worldliness. They present themselves as spouses of Christ and queens in bright "Robes and Crowns of Gold"(1.120). As an inducement, Isabel is offered the position of abbess. William Fairfax is portrayed as the 'perceptive' protagonist who sees through the nuns -"Tis thy state,/ Not thee, that they would consecrate"(11.221,222). Marvell further sanctions the actions of William by stating that before he acted, the 'hero' deliberated on religious "right" and justice and secures the court's lawful consent(1.227). Isabel is rescued to become a vessel in establishing the Fairfax line.

As Isabel is subordinated to her social function in the bearing of offspring to continue the social structure, so too, Marvell suggests that Henry VIII rescued monastic lands for the active service of the state. "At the demolishing, this Seat/ To Fairfax fell as by Escheat" alludes to the acquisition of Nun Appleton for the use of the socially prominent Fairfax family.

Inasmuch as Marvell questions two views of the retired life for their lack of social connection, he also scrutinizes the public rôle of the poet in times of civil turmoil. Like his patron, the poet does not live in nor can

he recreate in a social vacuum. They are both equalized under the impingement of civil chaos on their private worlds which limits their social effectiveness. In the meadow, Marvell presents the influence of external strife on the poet's inner creative world in his portrayal of a disordered nature. The poet observes that the men in the meadow appear to be as small as grasshoppers and the grasshoppers seem to be as large as "Gyants"(1.373). The water images suggest the chaotic cosmos before God created order. Inasmuch as his biblical imagery of the Israelites and the Red Sea indicate divine deliverance, this is undercut by the images of violence and war that reflect the external civil strife. The rail's murder suggests the precariousness of humility in a society where all principles of hierarchy are overthrown.⁴ "When lowness is unsafe as Hight,/And chance o'takes what scapeth spight?", further indicates the vulnerability of men such as Lord Fairfax and indeed, all men in political upheaval(11.411,412). Again the external destructive social world impinges on the countryside in the military images describing the mowers' work as the cut grass becomes "Bodies slain" and the women's labour is translated into "the Pillaging" (11.422,424). However, the poet reminds the reader that these perceptions are a product of his creative mind and that his rôle is that of interpreter and guide⁵: "No Scene that turns with Engines strange/ Does oftener than these Meadows change" (11.385,386).

Moreover, inasmuch as Marvell suggests that the poet could react to social disorder by mirroring it in his work, in the woods, he also indicates that the writer can attempt to fulfill his rôle as social prophet within the limitations imposed upon him. In his quest for a pattern for social order, he looks to God's revelation of a framework on earth, that is, nature. Through meditation, by linking himself to nature, the poet attempts to gain a prophetic vision. First, he establishes the woods' link to spiritual insight. He states that, like Noah's ark, the forest offers "Sanctuary" (1.42). The woods become the symbol of the purification or the poet's acquiring of new perceptions alluded to in the reference to the "Fifth Element", a hermetic concept (1.502).⁶ The poet associates his enlightenment with divine intervention in his allusions to Christ's redemptive sacrifice in the image of the doves. The song of the doves is associated with Christ's lament on the cross, the soul's sorrow and the marriage of the chaste soul to Christ.⁷

Marvell suggests that these woods provide an atmosphere that induces meditation in the creative mind. In the image of himself as the inverted tree, he proposes that his roots are in heavenly not earthly soil and thus, he is nourished by divine insight which enables him to converse, like unfallen Adam, with all of creation. The poet again draws the reader's attention to his recreating mind through

which meditation and insight are possible-" Out of these scatter'd Sibyls Leaves/ Strange Prophecies my Phancy weaves"(11.577,578). In his imaginative recreation he gains Historical/religious perspective:

And in one History consumes,
 Like Mexique-Paintings, all the Plumes.
 What Rome, Greece, Palestine, ere said
 I in this light Mosaick read.

(11.579-582)

In the same way he creates a "Mask", the poet's recreative ability enables him to achieve not only a union with the landscape (formerly found in the pre-lapsarian state) as he "licks, and clasps, and cules, and haies " but also to effectuate a transformation as he becomes an ecclesiastical figure- a "Prelate of the Grove"(11.586,590,592). In this way, he reconciles man's spiritual and sensual nature and can become the social prophet, gaining an insight that will bring some structure to the tumultuous external world.

However, Marvell also scrutinizes his prophetic ability and concludes that it is limited due to the post-lapsarian state of man and his world. Once again, the poet employs military and destructive imagery to indicate the vulnerability of the internal sphere to external forces. As ark, the woods may offer sanctuary but the creatures found therein are in "Armies not in Paires"(1.488). The images of the "Shot" and the "Horsemen "

also suggest the threat of the external political world (11.605,608). Marvell's reference to the oak that falls due to the "Traitor-Worm" alludes to the execution of Charles I and the demise of the old order (1.554). Moreover, the poet proposes that the fallible mind can misread nature's divine revelation suggesting there is always an element of self-delusion - "Thrice happy he who, not mistook, / Hath read in Nature's mystick Book" (11.583,584).⁸ He acknowledges that this mystical world is "too weak" to restrain external influences (1.613). His references to the restraining briars that should nail him through in order to ensure his stay allude to Christ and His redemptive act. As a symbol of both the contemplative and the active life, the Christ figure indicates the post-lapsarian reality, both worlds are necessarily interdependent rather than exclusive. Marvell concludes that the poet as social prophet can only offer an imperfect map for order. Upon his return to the Fairfax garden, he alludes to the platonic world in the reflecting stream and indicates that he has perceived the fleeting shadow of celestial perfection and mourns for this loss of harmony in the fallen world:

Till as a Chrystal Mirrour slick;
 Where all things gaze themselves, and doubt
 If they be in it or without.
 And for his shade which therein shines,
 Narcissus like, the Sun too pines. (11.636-640)

Due to political circumstances, since Lord Fairfax cannot be the conveyor of the poet's social vision, he employs Maria as the vessel for his insight. She becomes the symbol of hope for a future social structure. Just as she organizes nature, so too, by the imposition of patriarchal values on Maria in her fulfillment of her socio-reproductive rôle, Marvell attempts to recall England's former harmonious condition. He endeavours to reconstruct the former link between the social structure of the private household and that of the external state. The poet connects Maria to his divine insight. Like the poet and her father, Maria's wisdom comes from "Heaven's Dialect"(1.712). Yet, in her private woman's sphere and with her spiritual insight, Marvell suggests that unlike himself and Fairfax, she is impervious to the strife of the external world symbolized in her suitor's "watry Shot"and "Loves Cannon"(11.715,716). She is empowered by her immunity to bring order to the external world symbolized in her dominion over nature. Through her, nature is "vitrified"(1.688). Like Jonson, Marvell presents an artificial nature to indicate her command over the countryside: the stream contracts itself in order to retain her shadow and the fish hang in the air to catch sight of her. It is she who bestows "streightness on the Woods" and sweetness to the meadow (1.691). However, like her heavenly namesake, Maria combines both the contemplative and the

active life. As Mary became the vessel of man's redemption through Christ in her participation in the active life through her reproductive ability; so too, Maria is to provide Fairfax heirs for the future society-"Till Fate her worthily translates / And find a Fairfax for our Thwaites (11.747,748). Her subordination to the patriarchy is symbolic of Marvell's hope for the future establishment of order in the state. However, the poet again acknowledges that the lesser world of Fairfax and the state sphere are circumscribed by their postlapsarian condition and consequently, only an imperfect map for order can be offered:

Tis not, what once it was, the world;
 But a rude heap together hurl'd;...
 Your lesser World contains the same .
 But in more decent Order tame.

(11.761-762,765-766)

Marvell's "Upon Appleton House", presents the civil turbulence of the mid-century as England moved from the old feudal hierarchical order to constitutional monarchy. His poem is transitional, incorporating both the earlier Jonsonian view of the retired life and the skepticism of later Restoration. He presents himself as the "rational Amphibie" as he tries to balance both his internal creative world and the tumultuous external world (1.774). Like Jonson, Marvell presents the dominance of

the patriarchal structure in the private sphere exemplified in Maria's 'enlightened' subordination to her social reproductive function as his imperfect map for state order. While Jonson emphasized the public significance of his patrons as didactic figures, Marvell attempts to present the interdependence of the individual and his social obligations by adding a psychological dimension to his own persona.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹Gerrard Winstanley, The Law of Freedom and other Writings, ed. Christopher Hill, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 275.

²Donald M. Friedman, Marvell's Pastoral Art, (London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) p.199.

³Andrew Marvell, "Upon Appleton House" in Andrew Marvell Complete Poetry, ed. George deF. Lord, (London: Everyman's Library, 1984), 1.6, p.61. Further references to this poem are from the above source.

⁴Donald M. Friedman Marvell's Pastoral Art, p.232.

⁵Warren L. Chernaik, The Poet's Time: Politics and Religion in the Work of Andrew Marvell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) p.32.

⁶Maren Sofie Rostvig, The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal, Vol 1, 2nd.ed. Norwegian University Press. (New York: Humanities Press, 1962) p.180.

⁷Harold E. Toliver, Marvell's Ironic Vision, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p.118.

⁸Warren L. Chernaik, The Poet's Time, p.37

CHAPTER V

Margaret Cavendish : Authority in Androgyny

Like Andrew Marvell, Margaret Cavendish was also influenced by the turbulent civil war era and the Interregnum. Whereas Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" reflects the psychological and social impact of the civil turmoil in his scrutiny of the retired life and the poet's rôle, Cavendish's poetry presents the tensions inherent in the female poet who seizes the freer political atmosphere to write and yet, like Lanier, she is inhibited by her internalized patriarchal notions of the female rôle. While Marvell expands Jonsonian conventions of the country-house genre, thereby creating psychological depth in his interplay between the individual and society, Cavendish is original in her portrayal of her own psyche in the conflict between a socially imposed and internalized rôle and her personal literary ambitions. However, both Marvell and Cavendish are interested in the creative individual and nature as inspiration.

While the overthrow of the former male-dominated hierarchy facilitated an expansion of women's hitherto limited role and encouraged their taking up of the pen, they still had to work within the restrictions of modesty and the private sphere. The historical gap created for women was influenced by

two factors that encouraged less emphasis on the traditional value of education . First, radical forces of the Interregnum who perceived the links between the established education and ideological indoctrination and the dominance of church and state wanted to abolish universities.¹ Second, in the scientific community, the reformers involved in the establishment of the Royal Society argued for empirical observations as a basis of knowledge rather than dependence on traditional classical sources and they also maintained that texts should be written in a colloquial and clearer language.² Her lack of a classical education encouraged Cavendish to appeal to originality and thereby, gain support for her writing.

However, while these factors contributed to an atmosphere that encouraged mid-century writers, they were still restricted by social conventions and their internalization of them. Sara Heller Mendelson suggests that English women still subscribed "to the contemporary scientific worldview which affirmed their innate inferiority".³ Also, while Protestantism encouraged individualism in the male head of the household, the long-term effect on their wives was to enforce their dependence and as supporters of religious values, these women upheld a social framework that kept them in their place.⁴

To accommodate both her literary endeavour and the

conventions of modesty and the private sphere, Cavendish's Poems and Fancies contains many apologies to the reader and attempts at self-justification. Also, she presents herself as an androgynous figure - the modest imaginative female who recognizes her private sphere and the public male self who is ambitious for the fame of authorship and whose authority is firmly established in a literary tradition. Further, androgyny accommodates her social status as a monarchic and hence, hierarchical supporter who recognizes both her female subordinate position and her literary 'male' bent. The mid-century struggle between the powers of the old and the new system is reflected in the tension between the female private realm and the public male literary one of Cavendish's poems. In its link to the edenic myth, the pastoral becomes the likely ground to find authority for the equality of the sexes in artistic creation as promoted in Genesis I: 27-28. Moreover, in its former connection to the now defunct feudal hierarchy, the pastoral suggests women's position - both the internalization of their subordinate rôle in this older system and their attempt to subvert this position.

Indeed, Poems and Fancies was a product of the times revealing the psychological and social reality of mid-century. It was created during England's Interregnum when the poet had to abandon her political exile and the private sphere in order to negotiate for the estate of her

royalist husband. In her justification for her writing, she reveals an androgynous nature that links both the conventional private realm and the public literary sphere by endorsing the patriarchal female 'image' and appropriating male ambition for fame. In her address, "To The Reader," she presents her book as "harmless, modest, and honest", contributing to personal virtue in keeping her from idleness: "...my Lords Estate being taken away, [I] had nothing for Huswifery, or thrifty Industry to imploy my selfe in".⁵ She claims for women a freedom from the rules and methods imposed on writers by the literary climate of the seventeenth century, through her emphasis on female imagination: "Fancy, Women may claime, as a worke belonging most properly to themselves" ("To All Noble and Worthy Ladies", A3).⁶ Further, while apprehending her vulnerability to social criticism, she is determined to enter the public sphere and fulfill her personal quest for literary recognition: "I am resolv'd to set it at all Hazards" and "If Fortune be my Friend, then Fame will be my Gaine" ("To the Reader"). By examining her treatment of nature in her poems, one can perceive the poet's attempt to reckon with her female private and male public persona in androgyny.

In "A Dialogue Between an Oake and a Man Cutting Him Downe," Cavendish makes use of the amatory pastoral dialogue to reflect ironically on the nature of human ambition. (Her subversion of the convention may indicate

her rejection of its portrayal of women as simply objects of male desire). The poem can be analyzed on three levels. At the narrative plane, an ambitious man desires to fell a protesting tree in order to make a ship or a house. In a historical/allegorical context, the oak represents Charles I who was destroyed by avaricious men. On a third level, Cavendish indicates the difficulties of female ambition within the restrictions of the traditional female rôle.

In the oak as a symbol of Charles I and his execution, Cavendish, like Marvell, presents the impingement of the external civil turmoil on the pastoral retired landscape and suggests the interdependence of the retired and active worlds. Cavendish establishes the link between the oak and the king in 'Man's' reference to the tree's "Crowne" and its position as "King of all the Wood".⁷ The poet's monarchist bias is perceived in her presentation of an edenic state in nature which is connected to the pre-civil war order in which the king is associated with virtue in the oak's "Love and Good Will" towards men(1.17). The oak provided for man's comfort, sheltering him from the sun's heat and the winter's snow. Also, the linking of the oak with spiritual virtue and prelapsarian insight suggests divine sanction for the old hierarchy and Charles' kingship(i.e.the divine right of kings). The oak is associated with Christ as victim. It is "true love" that

will be slain, suggested in the reference to the wedges that "pierce my sides to wound"(11.21,25). The oak is also connected to a constancy that mirrors the divine sphere. Unlike man, it is satisfied with its position - "With my condition I contented am" (1.137). In its discernment of man's ignoble nature, the oak reveals a superior insight compared to his human foe. It perceives that if it succumbs to 'Man's' temptation of acquiring knowledge (if it becomes a ship) and to his appeal to pride (if it becomes a stately house), the oak's destruction will ensue.

While Cavendish alludes to her support for the former monarchical order by linking it to the oak's prelapsarian state, she further reinforces her allegiance by her condemnation of men ambitious for crown power. The poet associates the oak's destruction and making way for avaricious acorns to the fate of kings who have acquisitive and inconstant subjects:

Ambition flieth high, and is above
 All forts of Friend-ship strong, or Naturall Love.
 Besides, all subjects they in change delight,
 When Kings grow old,their Government they flight"

(11.37-40)

The reference to the "greedy Merchants" that would over-freight the oak, as ship, and destroy it alludes to the king's opponents, the Puritans who were connected to the capitalistic merchant class.

The poet's ambiguous presentation of 'Man' as satanic seducer and sympathetic philosopher indicates the third level of meaning in the poem, the contradictions that the female writer experiences at mid-century. While she upholds the old hierarchical system and condemns its destruction through ambitious men, she cannot completely denounce ambition since she too, aspires to a changed social view of women that would support their entrance into the male-dominated public literary realm.

'Man' tries to seduce the oak to his malicious plans by appealing to his pride much like Satan tempted Eve. He proposes that if the oak's wood is used for the construction of a ship, it would gain knowledge in its travels and if its wood were part of a stately house, it would have pleasure from a prince's extravagant entertainments. However, 'Man' is also the philosopher suggesting that humanity's ambition arises from man's soul in its search for God's perfection. What Cavendish portrays in 'Man' is her recognition that female ambition for personal enhancement and literary fame while offering the advantage of 'knowledge' (the expansion of her hitherto enclosed sphere) and social recognition by providing extravagant entertainment, also means the destruction of the former hierarchical view of the subordinated role of women which she had internalized as a monarchist supporter. This internalized view is alluded to in her positive presentation of the oak's 'female virtues'

as the comforter of man. The poet is torn between the endorsed traditional views of women's honourable and modest role: "More Honour tis, my owne green Leaves to beare./ More Honour tis, to be in Natures dresse,/ Then any shape , that Men by Art expresse" and her own ambition to write , to attain male literary creativity - "But Man hath something more, which is divine./ He hath a Mind, doth to the Heavens aspire"(11.125-127,149-150). She would like to be part of the "Playes" and "Masques" that ambitious 'Man' presents but realizes the hazards - her honour might be victimized by public ridicule. This is conveyed in the oak's reluctance to be part of artistic entertainment - "Alas, what Musick shall I care to heare / When on my shoulders I such burthens beare? / ... Of this Preferment I am sore afraid" (11.114-117). Like the interdependence of the external and pastoral landscape, the poet suggests the androgynous state of the mid-century female writer in the interrelation of the public and private sphere.

Moreover, in "Nature Calls a Councill, which was Motion, Figure, matter and Life, to advise about making the World", Cavendish unites nature, female fecundity and creativity to promote women's literary endeavours as natural and to gain authority from women's customary association with 'mother nature'. While she lends an air of authority to her poem by using the scientific terms of the male domain such as "Vacuum" and "Motions", nevertheless, she portrays

the patriarchy as the foe of female literary generation.⁸ The poet employs the pastoral amatory dialogue using nature and her assistants rather than two lovers. Cavendish associates nature, female propagation and creativity when she states that the world nature generates is her "childe from all Eternitie"(1.24). This connection is enhanced by the personification of nature in the pronoun "she"(1.1). By proposing that female nature created the world instead of the patriarchal figure of God, the poet subverts the view of a male traditional literary power derived from divine generation. In this way, Cavendish establishes a feminine tradition for female literary creativity: "When Nature first this World she did create, / She cal'd a Counsell how the same might make" (11.1,2). In suggesting that nature created in order to receive praise, Cavendish seems to allude to her own desire for fame as an impetus for her literary endeavour.

The poet indicates the threat that the seventeenth-century patriarchy presented for female literary creation in the figure of death who is linked to male power and destruction: "Alas, said Life, what ever we do make, / Death, my great Enemy, will from us take: / And who can hinder his strong, mighty power?" (11.35-37). The poet's use of military images indicates the destructive nature of male power - Death is a "Warriour strong, and stout" (1.104). However, she proposes that the means to defeat patriarchal

limitations is through the creative mind of the female writer whose work will endure beyond her lifetime -through "Knowledge", "Understanding" and "Wit", "... the Minde shall live, and never die" (11.114,133). In this way, the poet promotes the androgynous state of the female writer by linking the traditional view of female propagation to artistic creativity and suggesting that they are the natural extensions of one another as opposed to the patriarchy's unnatural and destructive concepts of women .

Once again "Nature's House" addresses the problems of the female writer but this time through an original adaptation of the country-house genre. Unlike Marvell, Cavendish does not employ the convention of the specific patron and estate. However, she does establish the interdependence of the active male external sphere and the female private realm associated with the retired life to justify the androgynous state of the female writer. While she connects the feminine architecture or 'house' to nature and natural virtue, she reveals the impingement of the external strife on this retired and private sphere. She states that "This House is furnished best of Natures Courts, / For hung it is with Virtues of all sorts".⁹ Indeed, the female 'house' is associated with "honesty", constancy and the feminine virtue of chastity-"The Harth is innocent Marble white"(11.2,13). But the poet also alludes to the imposition of the external turmoil on this retired realm-

"The Doores are Cares, Misfortunes out to shut , /That cold Poverty might not through them get"(11.15,16). This reference seems to indicate Cavendish's state at the time of the poem's creation. She came to England in the Interregnum to settle her husband's estate only to have her petition rejected.

Just as the retired and active spheres are interrelated, so too, female virtue is connected to male ambition in the androgynous nature of the female poet. In the traditional concept of the pastoral, its values had significance in the amelioration of society. So too, womanly virtues ennoble female ambition for literary fame which is a characteristic of the public male domain. Thus, Cavendish connects ambition to "Noble Deeds" and naturalizes it by suggesting that nature takes pride in "Turrets of Fame"(11.19,21). The poet justifies the androgynous nature of the female writer by linking it to the traditionally accepted interdependence of the retired and active life-"As Morall Virtues, and with those of Art, /The last from Acts, the first is from the Heart"(11.25,26).

Like Marvell's country-house poem, Cavendish's pastorals reflect the psychological and social complexities of mid-century. Marvell questioned the rôle of the poet and the validity of the pastoral feudal values in times of civil chaos. For Cavendish, in its former connection to the now defunct feudal hierarchy, the pastoral represents her

psychological position; that is, both her internalization of the feudal concepts of woman's subordinated and passive rôle as patriarchal 'vessels' relegated to the private sphere and her subversion of this concept in the autonomy afforded by the public active sphere of literary endeavour. What Cavendish captures in her poems is her struggle to give birth to her subjective self in the image of her androgyny. Like Marvell, she is the amphibian who treads between indoctrinated external concepts concerning women's natures and her internal subjective view of herself as an original participant in society through her creative writing. This is reflected in her CARPE DIEM perspective: "And if it be an Age when the effeminate Spirits rule, as most visible they doe in every Kingdome ,let us take the advantage, and make the best of our times, for feare their reigne should not last long..."(To All Writing Ladies).

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

¹Elaine Hobby , The Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1646-1688, (London: Virago Press, 1988), p.194.

²Ibid.,p.195.

³Sara Heller Mendelson, The Mental World of Stuart Women:Three Studies, (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press,1987),p.187.

⁴Ibid.,p.188.

⁵Margaret Cavendish, "To the Reader" in Poems and Fancies 1653(Yorkshire, England: The Scholar Press,1972).

⁶Sylvia Bowerbank, "The Spider's Delight: Margaret Cavendish and the "Female" Imagination English Literary Renaissance 14, no.3 (1984).395.

⁷Margaret Cavendish, "A Dialogue between an Oake , and a Man cutting him downe" in Poems and Fancies, 11.30-34, p.67.*

⁸-----."Nature calls a Councell" in Poems and Fancies , 11.21,22, p.1.*

⁹-----."Natures House" in Poems and Fancies,11.23,24, p.133.*

* Further references to these poems are from the above sources

CHAPTER VI

Charles Cotton : A Critique of Hobbesian
Materialism

While the pastorals of the mid-century reflect the political, social, and psychological upheavals of the civil war and the Interregnum period, Charles Cotton's poems are a criticism of the preponderance of Hobbesian materialism in the Restoration era. In his nostalgia for feudal values, Ben Jonson employed the Anglican view of an hierarchical and interdependent nature; however, he captures capitalistic undertones. Writing in the Restoration period, Cotton could not follow altogether in the cavalier footprints of his predecessor. Indeed, the Restoration brought the challenge of working out a new concept of sovereignty based on changing power structures that would ultimately lead to constitutional monarchy. The idealistic feudal values of Jonson based on a sense of mutual responsibility were eclipsed by capitalistic principles. The civil war and the sense of transition imbued Cotton's poetry with skepticism, realism, and nostalgia for the Jonsonian pastoral ideal. He presents an Arcadian nature as a retreat from urban values yet, realistically, also influenced by them. Consequently, unlike Jonsonian

optimistic encomium and Marvell's transcendence, he employs a plain style and conversational speech to emphasize a direct and sincere, if somewhat skeptical and ironical, appreciation of natural pleasures and friendship. By examining Cotton's portrayal of human relationships, nature and furthermore, the poet's role, one perceives a nostalgia for the hierarchical system of privilege and responsibility that subordinated women and supported limited exploitation of natural and human resources. Cotton becomes the critic of the predominating materialistic values and its unrestrained commercial exploitation of men, women, and nature. Moreover, Cotton foreshadows modern individual alienation.

In "The Retirement", "To my Friend, Mr. John Anderson From the Country", and "To my Dear and Most Worthy Friend, Mr. Izaak Walton", Cotton criticizes Restoration materialism found in the city/court by contrasting its destructiveness and artificiality with the former feudal values of responsibility and harmony found in the natural pleasures of the country. However, in all three poems, Cotton's ironical treatment of nature suggests, like Marvell, the dominance of the external value system which makes idealization of the pastoral quite impossible. Consequently, the poet's role becomes more critical than didactic.

"The Retirement" contrasts the external artificial

world where men are adversaries contending for power, to the country retreat. Cotton links the outer sphere to "conspicuous theatres, / Where nought but vice and vanity do reign".¹ He suggests the loss of the former sense of correspondence and responsible interdependence in the chain of being. Whereas the image of the world as theatre formerly reflected the macrocosm/microcosm connection, this harmony is now broken by man's selfishness. The words, "treachery" and "none other to displease" indicate that the outer sphere is one of corruption and that in the struggle for affluence, integrity is sacrificed (11.42,33). With this emphasis on material benefits, nature becomes a pawn, a commodity for maximum exploitation - the "Loire's pure streams yet too polluted are"(1.48).

In contrast, the country offers an escape from the treachery of the court and provides refreshment for both soul and body. In solitude, man has the freedom to please himself. The poet supports the Anglican hierarchical view of nature, linking it to spiritual values not found in the external world. Solitude is "the soul's best friend" since it is conducive to divine contemplation - "...all his Maker's wonders to intend"(11.22,24). However, Cotton avoids Marvell's transcendence in nature by linking meditation with reading, writing, walking and riding suggesting that country solitude provides for the realistic needs of the whole man.

The poet portrays nature in the spirit of

ample generosity but his images of moderation indicate the former hierarchical views of man's obligation in limiting exploitation. Nature gratifies the senses. Her beauty is aesthetically pleasing and she both nourishes and refreshes the body:

How beautiful the fields appear!
 How cleanly do we feed and lie!
 Lord! what good hours do we keep!
 How quietly we sleep!
 What peace! what unanimity!

(11.9-13)

Indeed, the only treachery here is the natural one of catching fish. However, this employment of natural resources is balanced by the image of moderation associated with the old hierarchical concept of interdependence. The poet refers to the pleasant view from the mountain "crown" and the perspective from the valley below and suggests that the harmony in nature of both extremes reflects the accord and accountable interrelation of the chain of being (1.58).

Nevertheless, Cotton's ambiguous presentation of nature in stanzas nine and ten also indicates the impingement of the artificial and destructive world on the rural landscape which suggests that the pastoral world can no longer be linked to Jonsonian manorial values. The poet describes the caves in both positive and negative images as a beloved retreat and also, as an unnatural and

desolate place: "What safety, privacy, what true delight /
 In the artificial night / Your gloomy entrails make"
 (11.64-66). He proposes that outside society cannot be
 escaped and indeed, follows him to his seclusion in "hotter
 persecution" (1.63). Also under its influence, nature
 cannot be edenic but must reflect the external postlapsarian
 state - subject to mutability in the changing seasons of
 "Winter's cold and Summer's worst excess" (11.81,82). The
 poet acknowledges the social reality, proposing that all men
 may hope for is distance from the power struggles and some
 contentment. His conditional "Would men" and "Might I"
 indicate his tenuous and skeptical outlook concerning the
 realization of his simple desires (11.74,77). Further, what
 he suggests is that in a society based on materialistic
 values, the contention for dominion also assures the social
 alienation of the individual. Since the sense of community
 of the Cavalier poet is no longer applicable, the poet
 becomes a figure secluded from the social realm, a skeptical
 critic rather than a moral teacher.

In "To my Friend, Mr. John Anderson From the
 Country," Cotton emphasizes the commercial basis of
 Hobbesian principles which places an artificial 'commodity'
 value on human relationships in contrast to the simple
 natural generosity and harmony of rural life. Again, in his
 portrayal of a realistic natural environment, the poet
 acknowledges the loss of the former hierarchical 'ideal.'

He suggests that the desire for preeminence in the city encourages antagonism between men: "You that the City life embrace, / And in those tumults run your race."² The city may provide the material benefits of "Rich wine, and excellent company" but, these are dependent on shifting political climes and as such, these pleasures are therefore, unreliable: "For you but tributaries are, / Aw'd by the furious men of War"(11.10,13,14). By drawing attention to its artificiality, the poet condemns the urban environment. The only means the city has to recapture the former hierarchical harmony is through art: "You, that to Masks and Plays resort, / As if you would rebuild the court"(11.5,6).

The poet further suggests that human relationships in the city are reduced to commercial values. This is indicated in the image of the "ycleped Bums," the unmerciful bailiffs who hound those in debt and the "unwholesome dames," the prostitutes whose bodies become items of trade. Cotton suggests that male/female relationships are reduced to economics: "...Your Beauties, that / You entertain with cost, and chat, / That make you spend your precious time and fat."(11.33-35). Furthermore, the talents of writers are exploited for commercial profit. Their survival and worth are dependent on selling their "paper pellets of small wit" or being reduced to poverty: "when none of them will hit, / Pawn cloak, or sword, Sir"(11.30,31,32). This skeptical

portrayal is far removed from Jonson's presentation of the elevated status of the moral poet as social prophet fulfilling his recognized role in an interdependent structure. Again, Cotton draws the reader's attention to the writer's sense of social alienation in the capitalistic order.

In the rural environment, Cotton attempts to present the harmony of the feudal structure in the natural generosity of its human associations; however, his presentation of male/female relations indicates the loss of the former social framework. He suggests that the country can match art's endeavour to "rebuild the Court"(1.7). Relationships in the country are established on trust and not on aggression for commercial gain and power. There is no threat from callous bailiffs. Your word is your bond - "we need no other bail Than our own word..."(11.27,28). Also, male/female associations are based on natural generosity rather than on economic exploitation. The poet's humorous presentation of "willing Winn, / With bucksome Bess, and granting Jinn, / ...That crackt the bed fast" undermines any notions of exploitation by its portrayal of mutual pleasure (11.37,38,40). However, this libertine view of human sexuality suggests that Jonson's presentation of husband/wife relationships that reinforced social values in the provision of heirs to support and carry on the patriarchal feudal structure could no longer be applied

in the political and social climate of the Restoration.

Further, Cotton proposes that nature's simple and bountiful fare provides peace for the mind and satisfaction for the body. Here the ale is "high, and mighty," if rather "strong and stale"(1.26). The spirit of peace and harmony is presented in the music, dancing and games of the rural folk as they "caper with Tom Thump, i' th' Hall" and "play at wasters" (11.45,52). This reference to country games alludes to the former feudal edenic state before the Puritan abolishment of these simple pastimes.

However, the poet's ironic portrayal of country pleasures as enjoyable but also crude indicates his recognition that the harmony of the former feudal structure is past and in the pastoral/social link, he can only present a realistic rather than an idealistic countryside. His self-mocking tone underscores his disillusionment. Consequently, rural entertainments can only be "pretty toys", momentary distractions from a destructive external world(1.57). The bagpipes provide music but they do not measure up to the former court performance of the "Lute, or Cremona" and Hobinol and Clout are not really "Knights" of the old feudal order(11.44,49). Cotton's self-mocking tone betrays his nostalgia for Jonson's idealized hierarchical structure.

Cotton's "To My Dear and Most Worthy Friend, Mr. Izaak Walton", further addresses the destructive nature of

Hobbesian materialism and its impingement on the pastoral world as well as on the Cavalier sense of community exemplified in the friendship of anglers. Once more, the poet links the external world to destructive Hobbesian principles but, this time more directly in his reference to the Leviathan - "...those, though not so high, / Who, like Leviathans, devour / Of meaner men the smaller fry" (11.38-40).³ He again suggests that in this newer social order, human relationships are reduced to the aggressive struggle for power which encourages unlimited exploitation of human resources and man's alienation from his fellows. This perspective is underscored when the poet connects this urban malignancy to the destructive images of winter and flood. He indicates the tempestuous political climate of the civil war and the Interregnum that he has endured:

Whilst in this cold and blust'ring clime,
Where bleak winds howl, and tempests roar,
We pass away the roughest time
Has been of many years before

(11.1-4)

The reference to the "great rains" alludes not only to the watery chaos before God's act of creation but also to Noah's disastrous flood and further indicates the political strife and loss of the former cosmic harmony and order (1.7). Moreover, Cotton also suggests the imposition of materialistic values on the pastoral landscape which

prohibits the former 'idealized ' view of nature - " The chillest blasts our peace invade, / And by great rains our smallest brooks / Are almost navigable made" (11.6-8). Indeed, in the image of the widened brooks, he implies the exploitation of the natural landscape for commerce.

Nevertheless, the poet criticizes these capitalistic trends by contrasting them to the reflection of the former hierarchical value system still to be glimpsed in the rural environment. Cotton portrays the harmony and sense of community in the friendship of himself and Walton who share the love of fishing. The poet refers to Walton as his "Dear Friend" who is "so much belov'd" and suggests that in the companionship and ritual of angling he finds enjoyment in these turbulent decades- "We'll recompense an age of these / Foul days in one fine fishing day"(11.16,11,23,24). However, he indicates that their pastime is not unlimited exploitation by portraying fishing as the 'natural' treachery of betraying only the "scaly people" and by linking the sport to its religious implication of Christ as fisherman suggested in the master/disciple relationship of Walton and Cotton (1.34). Walton is the poet's "Master", his teacher of fishing skills (1.32). What the poet suggests is the former concept of limited exploitation implied in the interdependence and harmony of the chain of being which reflected God's own order. Further, Cotton again alludes to the concept of limited exploitation

in the moderation which he presents in nature. The day that they fish will be one "without too bright a beam" and warm without a "scorching sun"(11.29,30).

Once more, Cotton's ironic presentation of rural delights and also their vulnerability to destructive external forces indicates his nostalgia for a way of life that is slipping into the past and that can no longer be idealized in the pastoral except as a fleeting dream. This is suggested in his manipulation of time. He proposes that political upheaval is part of the past and the present in reference to winter storms that threaten "many years before" and the "ills " that though improved, are still present in "this dead quarter of the year (11.4,9,10). His hope of a beautiful fishing day with Walton is part of the precarious future -"Though nature now does weep in rain,/To think that I have seen her smile,/ And happily may I do again"(11.18-20). Indeed, when Cotton suggests that, without Walton's companionship, their special day would be but a "flatt'ring dream", he seems to indicate that man's former affiliation with his fellows is at an end as Hobbes' philosophy ushers in a future of individual alienation (1.44).

Jonson's country-house poems written in the prewar era, reveal the decline of the old hierarchy yet, Jonson's idealistic hopes for retaining feudal values. In this atmosphere, he presents the elevated status of the poet as

the teacher of social morals. In contrast , his Cavalier descendant, Cotton, writing in the aftermath of the civil war and the Restoration, presents a skepticism that was to find its flowering in the satirical writings of the eighteenth century. His poetry is imbued with a melancholic nostalgia for the Jonsonian 'ideal' that no longer exists (if it ever did). Cotton portrays his poetic rôle as the social critic and poets generally, as the victims of the newer capitalistic order, obliged to barter their talents for financial recompense. In both cases, the poet experiences social alienation. The Cavalier spirit entrenched in social ritual by Jonson and his tribe is undermined by Hobbesian philosophy. Cotton's epistolary verses are a last call for the friendship of men that was part of the interdependence and harmony of the old hierarchical system. The poet expresses his anxieties:

Heav'n, what an Age is this! What race
Of giants are sprung up, that dare
Thus fly in the Almighty's Face,
And with his Providence make war!

(11.1-4)⁴

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

¹Charles Cotton,"The Retirement" in Poems of Charles Cotton 1630-1687, ed. John Beresford, (New York:Bonni & Liveright Publishers,n.d.)11.6,7, p.45.*

²-----."To my Friend ,Mr.John Anderson from the Country" in Poems of Charles Cotton, 11.1,2, p.110.*

³-----. "To my Dear and Most Worthy Friend, Mr.Izaak Walton " in Poems of Charles Cotton, 11.38-40, p.81.*

⁴-----."Contentation" in Poems of Charles Cotton, 11.1-4, p.89.*

*Further references to the poems are extracted from the above source

CHAPTER VII

Katherine Philips: Virtue as Authority and the Bid for
Women's Literary Intellectual Equality

Like those of Charles Cotton, the Restoration pastoral poems of Katherine Philips criticize the dominance of Hobbesian materialism; however, she relegates this value system to the male social world. She presents a retreat into an Arcadian view of nature and like Lanier, rural retirement is associated with a female paradise. In the skeptical vein of the Restoration, she acknowledges that there can be no 'ideal' Eden, but the countryside can provide spiritual insight and physical comfort in the company of friends. Like Lanier, Philips uses the authority of virtue for her writing, although she promotes a more secular than pious view of women's moral excellence. However, in her effective and original employment of literary conventions, her poetry reveals the beginnings "of a long process of evolution whereby Literature lost its 'male' status as a professional discipline and became neutral intellectual territory, accessible to both sexes."¹ Indeed, towards the end of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century more emphasis was placed on developing women intellectually.

Philips' pastorals reflect the difficult Restoration climate in which women wrote. The late seventeenth century

witnessed the development of two trends for women. First, Elaine Hobby suggests that "after the Restoration of the Monarchy, women were driven back into their newly private homes, where they retreated to an espousal of virtue. Of necessity, they made themselves virtuous".² This was due to the misogynous character of Charles II's court in reaction against the female liberty of the Interregnum era.³ Hobby substantiates this view by suggesting that during this period, women were defined as sex objects, exemplified in the reputation of Charles' court for its profligacy and overt sexuality and also in the growth of home-grown pornography.⁴

Second, Sara Heller Mendelson indicates that there was somewhat of a shift in attitude towards women's education and intellect.⁵ Due to the growth of London and a widespread process of economic and cultural differentiation, a new class of leisured women, who were urban consumers, was created. In order to improve their matrimonial prospects, there was a growth of girls' schools to cultivate their ornamental graces. Also, new developments in the intellectual realm, argued that "education rather than nature was responsible for perceived differences of intellect between the sexes".⁶ In this climate, Anna Maria van Schurman of Utrecht argued for the right of women to develop their own intellectual ability within the patriarchal framework. In, The Learned Maid; or,

Whether a Maid may be a Scholar?, which was translated into English in 1659, van Schurman suggested that a classical education would make the scripture available and thus, promote virtue and also would keep women from idleness.⁷ Her approach to argumentation had much in common with her male contemporaries in citing Greek and Latin sources and advancing "a case carefully faithful to the syllogistic conventions of contemporary logic."⁸ Women were beginning to approach writing intellectually by adapting literary conventions.

Katherine Philips was influenced by these trends in her emphasis of the private sphere and her use of literary conventions. From the upper middle-class and educated at Mrs. Salmon's school in Hackney, she learned both French and Italian.⁹ Her educational background enabled her to gain recognition among literary circles for her translation of Corneille's Pompée. Orinda's Society of Friendship enabled her to write and be part of a distinguished literary circle that recognized her talent. One of her poems was used in the preface of the posthumous edition of William Cartwright's plays and a poem was written in her praise by Henry Vaughan in his 1651 collected works.¹⁰ Yet, despite the recognition of her literary ability, Philips had internalized the patriarchal restrictions of female modesty and the private realm and wrote letters to both Sir Charles Cotterell and Dorothy Osborne registering her distress at being viewed as an intentional public figure when her poems were pirated and published

(1664 edition). To Cotterell, she wrote apologetically, "I am obliged to you for the generous and friendly concern you take in the unfortunate accident of the unworthy publishing of my foolish rhymes".¹¹ Philips may have been concerned that her pirated edition might be inferior due to lack of editing but her need to apologize indicates the social stigma still attached to females who boldly appropriated the male literary tradition for themselves.

In an examination of her pastorals, one can perceive these Restoration trends; that is, the refuge in virtue and the retired life and the bid for female intellectual equality in literary endeavour in her effective original use of literary conventions such as the pastoral contrast and Petrarchan language of love. Her promotion of female retirement supports a perspective rendering women politically inactive. Nevertheless, Philips works within the seventeenth-century framework that she had internalized and employs woman's virtue for her authority to write and to subvert the male hierarchy by her promotion of female equality.

In "A Country-life", "Invitation to the Country" and "A Retir'd Friendship. To Ardelia," Philips effectively employs the pastoral convention, the contrast of country and town, to elevate the moral status of women by linking virtue, found in the natural environment, to the private sphere of women and contrasting this to the corrupt male active world.

Since the Jonsonian 'ideal' can no longer be reflected in the rural environment due to the destruction of the feudal structure, Philips proposes that its sense of virtue and community can now be mirrored in the private world of female friendship albeit, the power system that she promotes is based on equality. In this context, "A Country-life" presents the female writer as the natural prophet who teaches and criticizes social mores. She works within the patriarchal image of women's modesty and their position in the private realm to gain authority. However, she reveals more confidence in the female literary identity than Lanier or Cavendish.

Philips adeptly employs the edenic myth of the pastoral in "A Country-life" to acknowledge the 'fall' of the old order due to the strife of the male world and suggests that its spiritual values can still be found in the female sphere linked to ethical nature. She states that rural life "was the first and happiest Life" until "Pride exchanged Peace for Strife".¹² Like Cotton, she incorporates both skepticism and Hooker's Thomistic view of nature as a revelation of the divine. Nature is a "Hermitage" that fosters "Peace and Honour"(11.77,64). In the rural landscape, love and friendship are prized over the external male sphere's "Passion " and "thoughts of Ruling and Gain" (11.14,15). The poet connects the private female realm with this natural retired sphere:

When all the stormy World doth roar
 How unconcern'd am I ?
 I cannot fear to tumble lower
 Who never could be high.
 Secure in these unenvi'd walls
 I think not on the State.

(11.41-46)

She alludes to the secluded sphere of women, subordinated in the patriarchy, and suggests that the retired life offers protection from the corrupt male "State" (1.46). The poet proposes that women should make a virtue of necessity facilitating moral excellence in their protected sphere where "Silence and Innocence are safe" since they cannot achieve status in the male domain (1.49). In this way, they can elevate themselves morally above the male realm of "Vanity " and "War and Strife" (11.63,86). 'Silence' and 'innocence' suggest the female social model of passivity and chastity. Also, she links the private female world and the retired life through the domestic image of spinning - "In Privacy, [I] intend to spin / My future Minutes out" (11.75,76). Further, she proposes that in the retired realm, women gain "honesty" and experience the harmony of friendship which is not to be found in the male postlapsarian world (1.82). Indeed, in the former concept of the micro/macro correspondences, the virtuous and amiable female sphere "below" reflects the "Divine" (11.81,79). Once

more, she enhances women's ethical world by suggesting that they have exercised some liberty of choice by making the best of their situation in their fostering of virtue - "I am not forc'd to make retreat / But chuse to spend my Life"(11.87,88).

While Philips works within her social framework to elevate the position of women morally, her view of her role as poet indicates more confidence in female literary endeavour than Lanier or Cavendish. She links herself to the literary tradition of poets, neither male nor female who in their contact with nature as a reflection of Eden's perfection, were divinely inspired to be social prophets:

'Twas here the poets were inspir'd,
 Here taught the multitude ;
 The brave they here with Honour fir'd,
 And civiliz'd the rude.

(11.9-12)

Inasmuch as she lays claim to a natural "wit" or moral insight found in nature connected to women's private realm, like Marvell, she is also conscious of the individual writer's recreative interpretation of moral insight for social criticism - "I have a better Fate than Kings, / Because I think it so"(11.39,40). What one finds here is the assertion of self as female writer within social restrictions. Philips suggests that her socially imposed 'retirement' offers her the perspective of "Solitude" or

isolation which is a prerequisite for the social critic - "It is not brave to be possest / Of Earth, but to despise"(11.29,35,36). Her segregation as a female resigned to the private sphere and her own individual moral insight that makes her a critic of social mores have fused in her literary persona("But I, resolved from within, / Confirmed from without") to create the "brave" and "Honoured" social prophet who must "civiliz[e] the rude" (11.73,74,11,12).

In this vein, Philips efficaciously employs the pastoral contrast to condemn the destructive Hobbesian materialism of the male political domain by presenting it as artificial in opposition to her naturally virtuous female sphere. She suggests that due to men's struggle for power, their "thoughts of Ruling and of Gain", no one can be assured of his position and the state becomes one of "War and Strife" (11.15,86). Unlike the moral principles based on divine revelation in nature which promote mutual responsibility and harmony, the exterior world is one of artificial standards, of man's "Law" (1.21). The poet proposes that the world of the state is subdued by "Arts" (1.51). Its connection to nature is the synthetic garden of "Hide parke" where Spring is put on display (1.66). Further, love is reduced to "Sport" (1.60). While the female retired sphere supports love and accord in friendship, Philips contrasts the male exterior world of destruction and unbridled passion: "Courtship is all Fire and Sword" and

"These never know a noble Flame, / Tis Lust, Scorn, or Design"(11.27,61,62). Indeed, while knowledge of self, acquired in the private realm, leads to self-sufficiency and confidence, 'state' knowledge results in instability and dependency upon the opinions of others.

Further, in "Invitation to the Country," Philips works within the 'private' framework to enhance the moral status of women by effectively using the pastoral contrast to criticize the male sphere. By introducing a female friend, Rosania, to the rural landscape, the poet emphasizes the sense of community and unanimity in female friendship as opposed to the turmoil of the male state. Again, she suggests that the female retired isolation fosters the critical insight necessary for the poet's social criticism. Like Cotton, the poet employs the epistolary verse to denote the intimacy of female relationships. She also uses the literary convention of argumentation by analogy to introduce the pastoral contrast. Just as one gains an appreciation of friendship through its hardships ("'Tis Hardship only makes Desert complete"), so too, one can value the retired life by observing the drawbacks of the active city life.¹³

In her promotion of female virtue, Philips links nature to divine revelation and this retired world to the private sphere of women. She presents nature as God's hieroglyph, providing not only for contemplation of the divine but also, moral insight:

A Country-life assists this study best,
 Where no distractions do the Soul arrest
 There Heav'n and Earth lie open to our view,
 There we search Nature and its Author too.

(11.41-44)

Philips' use of the pronoun 'we' suggests that this retired world and its ethical implications is available to Rosania and herself. She also proposes that the rural environment provides insight that enables them to recognize the corruption and inconstancy of the male external sphere: "Possess with Freedom and a real State, / Look down on Vice, and Vanity, and Fate"(11.45,46). Indeed, unlike male power relations with women, the private/retired life allows for the equal "mingling [of] Souls" in harmonious female platonic friendship (1.47). Whereas for Cotton the unanimity of friends alludes to the former hierarchical perspective, for Philips this accord indicates the nature of women's honourable world. Again, her invitation to Rosania to make a virtue of necessity requires a choice that further elevates the moral stature of women - "And all those Grandeurs which the World do prize / We either can enjoy, or will despise" (11.49,50).

Moreover, the poet also links this private and virtuous female world to the critical ability of the creative writer as social prophet. She suggests that "Man unconcern'd without himself may be / His own both Prospect

and Security" (11.37,38). In this private virtuous sphere, the female writer's insightful mind can see through the "hidden lies" of the corrupt male state and can be a positive influence on society: "Kings may be Slaves by their own Passions hurl'd, / But who commands himself commands the World" (11.34,39,40).

Further, the poet promotes women's moral position by contrasting it to the corrupt and artificial male domain. While the women's private world encourages ethical principles, Hobbesian materialism dominates the male realm. The struggle for power elicits a false value system in which considerations of status overrides the worth of the individual:

For Titles, Honours, and the World's Address,
Are things too cheap to make up Happiness;
The easie Tribute of a giddy race,
And pay'd less to the Person then the place.

(11.15-18)

In her condemnation, Philips links the corruption of the male state to the delusionary attributes of satan as artificer. While the external state appears to be "glittering", it is also a "cheat"(1.31). It has allure, appealing to the senses but, it also hides a "sting" (1.34).

"A Retir'd Friendship. To Ardelia", further incorporates the patriarchal 'private' restrictions and the notion of female virtue as authority for her writing as a

social critic condemning the dominance of Hobbesian principles in male society. To this end, she aptly employs the pastoral country/city contrast and effectively uses an original adaptation of platonic love and the Petrarchan language of love to underscore the harmony and sense of community in female relationships. In previous literary works about friendship, women were portrayed as destroyers of male platonic associations.¹⁴ Moreover, the poet subverts the Petrarchan language of love reserved for male/female affiliations for feminine friendship based on equality rather than male dominance: women live "in one another's hearts" and are assured "of one another's mind."¹⁵ Like Cotton, Philips also uses the epistolary verse, the speaking voice and plain style to emphasize the intimacy of friendship but unlike Cotton's perspective, the rural landscape, like women's private sphere, is impervious to the corruption of the external world.

Once again, the poet connects the female retired realm to that of rural retirement and nature's inspiration to virtue. As divine hieroglyph, the natural world has no "disguise nor treachery" but fosters the "mingling [of] Souls" (11.9,2). The retired rural world symbolizes the private sphere of women liberated from the political turmoil of the male state - the "quarrelling for Crowns" and the "noise of wars" (11.5,15). Indeed, the poet suggests that the private sphere is a charmed circle, shutting out

external mischief that could destroy "Friendship" or "Innocence"(1.24). Again the poet alludes to the isolation and independence of the private realm that is necessary for the writer as social critic:

Here is no quarrelling for Crowns ,
 Nor fear of changes in our Fate;
 No trembling at the great ones frowns,
 Nor any slavery of State.

(11.5-8)

Her references to moderation in the female private sphere suggests the former feudal concept of responsibility and harmony that can now be found in the egalitarian female community. Indeed, the private sphere offers a "calm" and "shade" from the "scorching Age"(11.12,30,29).

In contrast, the poet condemns the male-dominated state influenced by Hobbesian materialism. She indicates that the external domain is consumed in its destructive struggle for power, its "quarrelling for Crowns" that promotes "clouds of dangers"(11.5,19). Once more, in her images of trickery and illusions ("disguise","treachery" and "deep conceal'd design") Philips links the male state to Satan's artifice and alludes to England's postlapsarian condition in the aftermath of civil war(11.9,10). However, she proposes that the female retired sphere has remained edenic.

Katherine Philips works within the social framework of privacy and female virtue to promote the moral status of

women and to gain authority as the social critic who condemns the materialism of the patriarchal state. Her critical tone suggests that if the Restoration's view of women as sexual objects was forcing them back into the private sphere, then they would make the best of circumstances, elevating their withdrawal with virtue and with literary wit. By presenting female relationships ideally as the sharing of minds, Philips castigates male/female relationships based solely on the sexual exploitation of women. She seems to have returned to Lanier's position indicating that women's social status had not improved in spite of the civil war and that women still take refuge in fantasy; nevertheless, her poetry reveals a movement towards female literary identity and a bid for female intellectual equality. She links herself confidently to the literary tradition of writers who are social prophets and she effectively employs literary conventions. Elaine Hobby suggests that by the end of the century, women looked to the power of well-trained reason to enhance their independence and self-respect.¹⁶

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

- ¹Sara Heller Mendelson, The Mental World of Stuart Women: Three Studies, p.190.
- ²Elaine Hobby, Virtue of Necessity, p.11.
- ³Ibid., p.86.
- ⁴Ibid., pp.85,86.
- ⁵Mendelson, The Mental World of Stuart Women, p.191.
- ⁶Ibid.
- ⁷Hobby, p.198.
- ⁸Ibid.
- ⁹Antonia Fraser, The Weaker Vessel: Woman's lot in seventeenth-century England, (London: Methuen, 1986), p.381.
- ¹⁰Hobby, p.129.
- ¹¹Angeline Goreau, The Whole Duty of a Woman: Female Writers in Seventeenth-Century England, (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1984), p.196.
- ¹²Katherine Philips, "A Country Life" in Poems by Mrs. Katherine Philips, The Matchless Orinda (London, 1667), 11.5, 7, p.88.*
- ¹³-----."Invitation to the Country" in Poems by Mrs. Katherine Philips, The Matchless Orinda, 1.8, p.103.*
- ¹⁴Elizabeth H. Hageman, "The Matchless Orinda, Katherine Philips, in Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation, ed. K.M.Wilson, (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1987), p.573.
- ¹⁵Katherine Philips "A Retir'd Friendship. To Ardelia" in E. Hageman's "The Matchless Orinda, Katherine Philips", 11.16, 33, pp.592-593.
- ¹⁶Hobby, p.163.

* Further references to these two poems are extracted from these sources.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion

Inasmuch as the decline of the old feudal hierarchy meant the destruction of England's former edenic state to the male writers of the seventeenth century, the female poets saw this as an opportunity to overcome some of the restrictions of their former positions in order to enter the male literary domain. While the male writers moved from a position of social identity towards modern alienation, the female poets developed a sense of literary selfhood.

Jonson, Marvell and Cotton used the pastoral to indicate the changing political climate of the century. At the beginning of the era, Jonson's country-house genre promoted the old feudal values in response to the encroachment of the new materialism. Patriarchal domination at the household level alluded to the sovereignty of the monarchy at the state plane. Jonson portrayed himself as transcending the class structure and fulfilling his social role as moral teacher. Marvell's transitional poetry at mid-century addresses the destruction of the former order and the attempt to establish a new social structure. His country-house poem questions the whole concept of the retired life and the public role of the poet in times of

civil strife. He looks to the patriarchal dominion over Maria's socio-reproductive function at the household level, as a pattern for order in the external world. In his poetic rôle, he sees himself as amphibious: balancing the external world and his internal landscape in artistic creativity. He is both dependent on patronage as well as being a dispenser of prophetic but imperfect vision. His psychological approach suggests the beginnings of social alienation. At the end of the century, Cotton's poems address the dominance of Hobbesian materialism and the demise of the former monarchical power. Consequently, as a cavalier, his work expresses his nostalgia for the old order and his criticism of the new social values. His emphasis on sexual freedom and pleasure seems to indicate the loss of the former patriarchal correspondence between the family household and the state. Cotton's poetical rôle is that of social critic and he foreshadows the eighteenth-century penchant for satire and the modern social alienation of the writer.

On the other hand, the poetry of Lanier, Cavendish and Philips reveals a movement towards literary identity for women. Secluded from the public sphere and having internalized male images of women, the female writers of the seventeenth century taking advantage of civil turmoil attempted to improve their moral status and further themselves as writers. Lanier links the private world of women to the retired sphere and its inducement to virtue in

order to elevate women's ethical position. She gains authority for her writing by portraying herself as an instrument in the promotion of feminine virtue. Her bid for social equality is expressed in the presentation of a female egalitarian society. However, the failure of her community acknowledges the dominance of the feudal male hierarchy and its subordination of women.

At mid-century, Cavendish is original in her presentation of androgyny. She tries to combine the retired/active life and the private female and the male social realms in her portrayal of the virtuous and ambitious female writer. Cavendish also connects the private world of women and the retired sphere. She looks to women's traditional link with creative nature for her authority as writer. The psychological conflict in her poetry and her promotion of women's originality in writing suggest a movement to female literary identity. Moreover, she presents her poetic role as the natural outpouring of the original female imagination if encumbered by male restrictions.

Like Lanier, Philips connects the country, virtue and moral insight and she equates these with the private sphere of women in order to foster the moral status of females and also to gain authority for her criticism of the male state. This may suggest that women had gained no ground in advancing their social status. However, there were some advances made in the development of female literary identity. Philips links

herself to the social prophets of the past recognizing her position in the literary tradition of the social critic. Indeed, her adept use of literary conventions indicates the beginnings of a bid for female intellectual equality in literary endeavour.

While the male writers of the period were coming to terms with the destruction of the old hierarchical system, the female writers who had internalized male notions concerning female nature, were starting to conceive of themselves as writers with the power to take part in their own representation within a limited context. They had taken from Adam the power to name and to recreate their world. The examination of the female writers of this period is still a relatively new field in which the discovery of 'new finds' is still in progress. Without these artifacts, we only have half of the story concerning our literary history. Elizabeth Barrett Browning expressed these sentiments in Aurora Leigh when she said:

Nay, if there's room for poets in this world
A little overgrown (I think there is)
Their sole work is to represent the age,
Their age... ¹

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

¹Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh, ed. Cora Kaplan, (London: The Women's Press, 1978), Book V, 11.200-203, p.201.

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